

NEWS RELEASE

Alabama Department of Public Safety

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TROOPERS WILL BE OUT IN FORCE DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Targeting Impaired Drivers, Seatbelt Enforcement During Christmas and New Year's

MONTGOMERY – Motorists will notice an increased trooper presence on Alabama's roadways throughout the holiday travel season, as all available troopers will be on duty during a stepped-up enforcement effort that will include routine patrols and special enforcement details such as checkpoints and line patrols.

According to Public Safety Director Col. J. Christopher Murphy, troopers will be targeting drivers impaired by alcohol or drugs during the holiday travel season. "There is no more imminent threat to traffic safety than the drunken driver," said Murphy. "Alabama troopers will be watchful for all traffic violations, but will be especially vigilant for drivers impaired by alcohol or drugs."

He urged motorists to drive with care and caution during holiday travel, buckling up on each and every trip. "The consistent use of seatbelts and child restraints helps guarantee safety," said Murphy, and troopers will specifically target violation of Alabama's safety belt and child safety seat laws. Failure to use restraints significantly increases the chances of severe or fatal injury, particularly in crashes involving higher speeds, he said.

Murphy also reminded motorists to focus on safety despite the distractions of the busy holiday season, and to practice courtesy and patience toward others with whom they share the road.

The Alabama Department of Public Safety estimates that 14 people may lose their lives in traffic crashes in the state during the 78-hour Christmas travel period, which begins at 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 22, and ends at midnight Monday, Dec. 25.

In 2005, 13 people died in traffic crashes on Alabama roadways during the 78-hour Christmas period, 10 on rural roadways and three in urban areas. Alcohol was a factor in at least three of the deaths, and eight of the wreck victims were not using safety belts.

The traffic fatality prediction for New Year's is that 14 people may die in traffic crashes in Alabama during the 78-hour period from 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 29, through midnight Monday, Jan. 1, 2007.

Last year, 10 people died during the 78-hour New Year's travel period, six on rural roads and four in urban areas. At least six of the deaths involved alcohol, and three of the crash victims were not using safety belts.

Murphy said Alabama troopers will participate in the pre-holiday safety campaign Lifesaver Weekend Dec. 15-17. The campaign is part of Operation CARE (Combined Accident Reduction Effort) a joint effort by state police nationwide to promote traffic safety during selected holiday periods through intensive enforcement of traffic laws and safety education.

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